Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of the claims replaces all previous listings and versions of the claims in the application:

Listing of the Claims:

1. (canceled)

2. (currently amended) The semi-submersible platform of Claim [[1]] 20, wherein at least two vertical risers pass through the central columnar buoyancy apparatus and are horizontally restrained below the center of gravity thereof.

3. (currently amended) The semi-submersible platform of Claim [[1]] 20, wherein the base is buoyant.

4. (currently amended) The semi-submersible platform of Claim [[1]] 20, wherein the central columnar buoyancy apparatus has a lower portion, and wherein the ~~at least one~~ riser is attached to the central columnar buoyancy apparatus within the lower portion thereof.

5. (currently amended) The semi-submersible platform of Claim 4, wherein the central columnar buoyancy apparatus has an upper portion, and wherein the ~~at least one~~ riser is attached to the buoyancy apparatus within the upper portion thereof.

6. (currently amended) The semi-submersible platform of Claim [[1]] 20, wherein the central columnar buoyancy apparatus comprises multiple compartments.

7. (currently amended) The semi-submersible platform of Claim [[1]] 20, wherein the central

columnar buoyancy apparatus is guided within each of the first and second moon pools by a plurality of guide assemblies.

8. (original) The semi-submersible platform of Claim 7, wherein the guide assemblies are complaint.

9. (original) The semi-submersible platform of Claim 7, wherein the guide assemblies maintain substantially constant contact with the central columnar buoyancy apparatus.

10. (original) The semi-submersible platform of Claim 7, wherein each of the guide assemblies includes a wear pad that engages the central columnar buoyancy apparatus.

11. (original) The semi-submersible platform of Claim 7, wherein each of the guide assemblies includes a roller that engages the central columnar buoyancy apparatus.

12. (original) The semi-submersible platform of Claim 7, wherein the guide assemblies include a plurality of wear pads on the periphery of the central columnar buoyancy apparatus.

13. (original) The semi-submersible platform of Claim 11, wherein the central buoyancy apparatus includes a plurality of vertical rails on the periphery thereof, each of the rails being positioned for engagement by one of the rollers.

14. (original) The semi-submersible platform of Claim 7, wherein each of the guide assemblies comprises a guide module that is lockably installable within one of the moon pools.

15. (currently amended) The semi-submersible platform of Claim [[1]] 20, wherein the buoyancy apparatus includes structure that defines an internal moon pool.

16. (currently amended) The semi-submersible platform of Claim [[1]] 20, wherein the platform includes a well deck that is supported by the buoyancy apparatus.

17. (canceled)

18. (original) A method of installing a floating, semi-submersible platform at an operational site on the sea surface over the seabed, comprising the steps of:

(a) providing an assembly comprising a buoyant base having a plurality vertical outer buoyancy columns upwardly therefrom, and a central columnar buoyancy apparatus located centrally within the base, the central columnar buoyancy apparatus being movable vertically relative to the base between an upper position and a lower position;

(b) towing the assembly at a shallow draft to a first site with the central columnar buoyancy apparatus in its upper position;

(c) ballasting down the central columnar buoyancy apparatus to its lower position;

(d) ballasting down the base to a first draft such that the outer buoyancy columns extend just above the sea surface;

(e) floating a deck structure over the base, the outer buoyancy columns, and the central columnar buoy;

(f) deballasting the outer columns to lift the deck structure;

(g) deballasting the central columnar buoyancy apparatus to raise it to its upper position in which it engages the deck structure to form a platform;

(h) towing the platform to a second site at an intermediate draft;

(i) ballasting down the platform to an operational draft; and

(j) anchoring the platform to the seabed.

19. (original) The method of Claim 18, wherein the central columnar buoyancy apparatus includes an upper stop assembly and a lower stop assembly, and wherein the step of ballasting down the buoyancy apparatus is performed until the lower stop assembly abuts against the base, and wherein the step of deballasting the buoyancy apparatus is performed until the upper stop assembly abuts against the deck structure.

20. (new) A semi-submersible platform, comprising:

a base having a first moon pool;

a plurality of vertical outer buoyancy columns extending upwardly from the base;

a deck structure supported by the buoyancy columns and having a second moon pool;

a central columnar buoyancy apparatus that is guided within the first and second moon pools for vertical movement between an upper position and a lower position relative to the base and the deck structure;

an upper stop assembly on the buoyancy apparatus that is engageable against the deck structure when the buoyancy apparatus is in its upper position;

a lower stop assembly on the buoyancy apparatus that is engageable against the base when the buoyancy apparatus is in its lower position; and

a riser passing through the buoyancy apparatus and horizontally restrained within the buoyancy apparatus below the center of gravity thereof.